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How to find the perfect host for your Web site

E-BIZ

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One of the most common questions people ask about their Web site is: where can I locate it?

For most entrepreneurs, it doesn't make sense to establish a Web site on their own computer system. The cost of putting in place a high-speed connection to the Internet in order to make the site available to the world can far exceed the relatively minor cost of locating it on someone else's computer.

It's also better that experts who know the technology are responsible for ensuring that the site is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Internet service providers (ISPs) have long been a good choice for Web site hosting. They should have the experience, skills, support systems and infrastructure to ensure that the site is available on a consist basis.

Yet many alternatives to traditional ISPs are now emerging, with a variety of companies hosting Web sites. One example is NetNation Canada (**www.netnation.ca**), a subsidiary of a U.S. organization that focuses on this opportunity as its primary business.

NetNation services range from a basic Web site for a fee of $10.50 a month, to a "power site" of up to 100 megabytes in size for $65. Both options specify a maximum amount of Web traffic appropriate to their size — exceed this limit, and you pay an additional charge of a few pennies a megabyte. But in many cases, your site would have to be huge and extremely busy to exceed the limits.

In going after the Web hosting niche, NetNation offers a number of supplementary services, such as full-fledged on-line stores using a variety of technologies, a choice of operating systems to host your store and Real G2 servers for audio and video elements. This allows you to take advantage of many other specialized capabilities in the creation of your site.

As an alternative to hosting your site on someone else's computer, you can still choose to use your own — simply place it at a company such as NetNation Canada or NetCom Canada. The "server co-location" services offered by these companies allow you to install your own computer hardware at their location.

They are then responsible for providing a link from your computer to the Internet, and for ensuring that your computer and Web site are accessible at all times. In other words, you use your own technology but take advantage of someone else's high-speed Internet connectivity and expertise. Have a look at the NetCom Canada co-location site (**www.nbc.netcom.ca/cbc/co-locate.html**), which lists some of its benefits.

Finally, keep an eye out for new and innovative methods of hosting a Web site, such as the services offered by a U.S. company called Rackspace (**www.rackspace.com**).

You can visit its site, fill out a form specifying the type of computer you need for your site, the type of operating system you want and the bandwidth you require. It will quickly set you up with a dedicated computer and Internet connection for a monthly lease fee.

Services such as these provide the flexibility of having your own system with the best possible type of Internet connection.

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